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Devoutly thankful we should be for such accumulated evidences concerning the truth of God's holy Word. They are priceless in themselves, and invaluable as regards their use and influence; but let us never forget that they are only meant to corroborate, and to lead us upwards to those higher evidences, which are the inheritance of him who truly belongs to Christ, and therefore "hath the witness in himself"—

"He who hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound, or doubt Him, or defy;
Yea, with one voice; O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side—for on this am I."

— *Walsh, in Pulpit Treasury.*

Traditions relating to Jeremiah.—1. That Jeremiah addressed a severe rebuke to the Jews in Egypt is the last undoubted fact which we possess in connection with him (chap. XLIV.; see note on ver. 1), and it has been conjectured that it was in accordance with his own desire that his faithful minister Baruch refrained from inserting in the Book of his prophecies any further particulars of his life or record of his end—so slender at the outset and even inconsistent are the traditional notices.

2. The Christian tradition was that the Jews in Egypt, provoked by his rebukes, stoned him to death. "Jeremias lapidatur" Tert. *adv. Gnost.* c. 8; "Jeremias lapidatus... a populo," Hieron. *adv. Jov.* II., 37. See also beginning of § 8 below.

3. The Jewish tradition, perhaps however invented by way of hiding the truth of the charge brought against them by the Christians, was that the prophet had escaped from Egypt to Babylon, and there died.

4. In the (Apocryphal) Book of Ecclesiasticus (chap. XLIX., 7), the date of which is very uncertain, Jeremiah is referred to thus:—"They entreated him evil, who nevertheless was a prophet, sanctified in his mother's womb, that he might root out, and afflict, and destroy; and that he might build up also, and plant." See Jer. I., 10.

5. In 2 Macc. II. 1-7 we are told that Jeremiah at the exile "commanded them that were carried away to take of the fire," and that "the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door. And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it. Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy."

6. Judas Maccabaeus before his conflict with Nicanor sees in a vision (2 Macc. XV., 12-16) "a man with grey hairs, and exceeding glorious, who was of a wonderful and excellent majesty... a lover of the brethren... Jeremias the prophet of God," who presents him with a sword of gold, by which to prevail.

7. The following is the form which the tradition had assumed in the time of Polyhistor (brought from the East to Rome by Sylla the Dictator). He is quoted by Eusebius (*Praepar. Evang.* IX., 39). In the time of Jehoiakim Jeremiah prophesied. He found the Jews sacrificing to a golden idol, named Baal, and announced the impending disaster. Jehoiakim was for burning him alive, but he said that

they (the Jews) should as captives cook food for the Babylonians and dig canals for the Tigris and Euphrates. The historian adds that Nebuchadnezzar hearing of these prophecies came with Astibar, king of the Medes, and captured Jerusalem, removing to Babylon the treasures of the Temple, "except the Ark and the Tables which were in it; these remained with Jeremiah."

8. In our Lord's time there are traces of a popular belief that Jeremiah's work on earth was not yet done, and this was one of the phases of Messianic hope. See Matt. xvi., 14, and compare John i., 21, where "that" (rather *the*) "prophet" is by some thought to have reference to him.

9. The treatise *De Vitis Prophetarum* attributed to St Epiphanius (died A. D. 402) relates as follows (showing that meanwhile the tradition had grown considerably), "Jeremiah the prophet was of Anathoth, and he was stoned to death by the people at Taphnae in Egypt. And he lies at the site of Pharaoh's house, for the Egyptians honored him, having received benefits from him; for asps and . . . crocodiles were destroying them, and at the prayer of the prophet Jeremiah both the venomous asps were driven from that land, and in like manner the treacherous beasts from the river, and all the faithful to the present day pray at that spot, and taking of the dust cure the bite of asps and put the crocodiles themselves to flight. This prophet gave a sign to the Egyptian priests, saying, that all their idols must be overthrown and all the works of their hands [see note on Jer. xxv., 7] collapse, when there should set foot in Egypt a virgin about to bear a Divine Child [Matt. ii., 14]. And so it was." Epiphanius adds that the memory of this prophecy is kept up by a ceremony continued to his own time. He continues:—"This prophet before the capture of the temple seized the Ark of the Law with all its contents, and caused it to be swallowed up in a rock, and said to the priests of the people and to the elders who stood by, *The Lord departed from Sinai into the heavens, and He will come again in sacred might. And this shall be the sign of His coming, when all nations bow down before wood (the Cross, see Matt. xxiv., 14). And he said to them, No one of the priests or prophets shall disclose this Ark, save Moses the chosen of God. The Tables that are in it none shall open save Aaron. And in the Resurrection the Ark shall rise first, and shall go forth from the rock and be placed on the Mount Sinai, and all the saints shall be gathered together to it, there awaiting the Lord, and shunning the enemy who desires to destroy them. And with his finger he impressed upon the rock the name of the Lord, and the impression was as though it had been cut with an iron tool, and a cloud overshadowed the rock, and no one knows that spot till the end of the world. And this rock is in the wilderness, where the Ark was first made, between the two mountains where Moses and Aaron lie. And at night a cloud like fire rests upon the spot, after the likeness of those of olden time, inasmuch as the glory of God will never desert His Law.*"—*Stearne in Cambridge Bible for Schools, Jeremiah.*